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Commissioner Notes

By James M. Thomas

The month of March is upon us, with the hope of spring bringing warm weather. Unfortunately there are no assurances that March or April will be warm and without any weather related issues.

This month we are highlighting the Planning Unit within our agency. The Planning Unit is critical to the success of any operation that is under taken by any emergency or public safety entity. We are especially proud of the fact that our plans have been rewritten during the past year to be compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This was a major undertaking by the Planning Unit that continues to review and update our agency response plans.

We are hopeful that all of the local emergency management directors working in concert with their partners in public safety are also rewriting and updating the plans for their respective municipalities. In the very near future, we will be having DEMHS planners in place who will be working with the area coordinators to review and assist any agency with their emergency response planning efforts. The key to handling any emergency is to have a well defined plan in place that has been exercised by the first responders in a training situation.

We know at DEMHS that all emergencies start at the local level and that perhaps the most important factor that must be taken into consideration is the initial response by the local emergency services. We at the state level are there to assist both the local and regional efforts that are in place and you can be assured that we continue to respect the importance of local control of emergencies.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of the DEMHS Advisor and we look forward to working with you in the coming months.

PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS UNIT

The DEMHS Planning and Preparedness Unit is headed by Paul Gibb, Emergency Management Program Supervisor, who has been with the Connecticut Office of Emergency Management (now DEMHS) for 28 years. There are 3 Emergency Preparedness Program Specialists (EPPS): Judy Pahl, Roy Piper, and Charlene Gallaway.

The Plans Unit develops and updates emergency response plans including: the **STATE OF CONNECTICUT NATURAL DISASTER PLAN - 2006**, approved and signed by Governor Rell on January 27, 2006; and the **STATE OF CONNECTICUT CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DELIBERATELY CAUSED INCIDENTS INVOLVING CHEMICAL AGENTS - 2006**, approved and signed by Governor Rell on January 27, 2006. Pursuant to Title 28 of the Connecticut General Statutes, these Plans spell out the emergency operating and response roles and responsibilities of Federal agencies, State agencies, and local governments. All government agencies, state or local, and all civil preparedness forces in the State shall carry out the duties and functions assigned by the Plan, as approved by the Governor.

The **STATE OF CT CATASTROPHIC DISASTER PLAN** is currently being updated and will be sent to State agencies and FEMA for review and comment in late 2006.

The Plans Unit also prepares special contingency plans, as directed by the Governor, such as the **STATE OF CT HEALTH CARE STATE SUPPORT PLAN 2001** and the **STATE OF CT Y2K EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**.

The Plans Unit staff also provide assistance to other state and local agencies in developing their response plans, including: the **STATE OF CT PANDEMIC INFLUENZA RESPONSE PLAN**, CT Department of Public Health, Revision of February 2006; the **STATE OF CT AVIAN INFLUENZA RESPONSE PLAN**, CT Department of Agriculture, January 11, 2006; the **STATE OF CT HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN**, CT Department of Environmental Protection; the **STATE OF CT DEBRIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**, CT Department of Environmental Protection; and the **TOWN OF STAFFORD HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN**.

Planning and Preparedness staff prepare the Governor's Request to the President for Major Disaster/Emergency Declarations, including supplementary justification, coordinate the Joint Federal/State Preliminary Damage Assessment Team effort, and prepare the FEMA/State Agreement. After the Governor's request has been approved, Paul Gibb, Emergency Management Program Supervisor, serves as the State Public Assistance Coordinator and as the Alternate State Coordinating Officer.

In May 2004, OEM/DEMHS became the state administrative agency for FEMA disaster assistance funds and the Public Assistance Program, taking over the duties formerly done by the Office of Policy and Management. Through the administration of the Public Assistance Program, DEMHS brings millions of dollars in Federal reimbursements to state agencies, local governments, and eligible private non-profit organizations. The **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN - 2006**, was approved by FEMA on March 1, 2006. The DEMHS Plans Unit, in coordination with FEMA, conducts the Applicants' Briefings, provides guidance to the applicants, and processes the application packets.

The Plans Unit staff represent DEMHS on the following commissions/committees: SERC - State Emergency Response Commission, E911 Commission, New England 700 MHz and 800 MHz Regional Planning Committee, VOAD - Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters, Communications Interoperability Committee, DPH Drinking Water Emergency Group, Drought Task Force, Mass Casualty Care Committee, Energy Task Force, CIHMC - CT Interagency Hazard Mitigation Committee, CHOC - CT Helps Oversight Council, and the Local Emergency Relief Advisory Committee. DEMHS is also working with New York City and New York State in planning for regional evacuation in the event of a hurricane.



Armory



CT Planning Areas

Planning Unit can't

The Plans Unit communicates with the Region I FEMA office on a nearly daily basis. Staff attends the RISC - Regional Interagency Steering Committee meetings where FEMA and other Federal Partner Agencies - U.S. Coast Guard, National Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, etc. meet with the State Emergency Management Directors of the New England Region (Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine) to coordinate catastrophic disaster planning.

The Plans Unit prepared a Model/Sample **LOCAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN (EOP) WITH FUNCTIONAL ANNEXES** which Towns may use as they update and revise their Town EOPs. In July 2005 a Draft Incident Command System Annex was prepared to be used as a component in a variety of State and local plans. These models are posted on the agency web site for use by local officials.

In 2004-2005 the Plans Unit collected and updated data for shelters, medical facilities, nursing homes, and mobile home parks in the coastal communities, to be used with the US Army Corps of Engineers comprehensive Hurricane Evacuation Study.

During emergency/disaster/alert activations, Plans staff work in the Operations Section of the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC 24/7 operations as needed). The EMP Supervisor performs the duties of the Chief Operations Officer; and the 3 EPPS perform the duties of Assistance Ops Officer, as well as providing radio communications support between the State Communications Office and the five DEMHS Area Offices, and serving as Transportation Resources Manager.

Plans Unit staff participate in all major exercises and drills, including Hurricane exercises, TOPOFF 3 in April 2005, and the Radiological Emergency Response/Millstone Station federally evaluated exercises.

The Plans Unit continually monitors other states After Action Reports to constantly prepare, review, and revise DEMHS Plans and Guides to reflect the latest, best practices in emergency management and homeland security and to incorporate the policies and procedures presented in the National Response Plan and the National Incident Management System.

The **Natural Disaster Plan**, the **Consequence Management Plan for Deliberately Caused Incidents Involving Chemical Agents**, and the **Model Local Emergency Operations Plan** can be found on the DEMHS web-site: www.ct.gov/demhs. Click on Emergency Management in the left section of the screen; then click on Planning Guides.

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VICE ADMIRAL SPEAKS TO A PACKED HOUSE

Vice Admiral Thad Allen spoke to a group of over 250 people on February 23, 2006 at Rentschler Field in East Hartford. The focus of his presentation was the issues and events, both before and after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the lessons learned from the latest natural disasters to strike the United States. We would like to thank the Vice Admiral for taking time out of his busy schedule to speak in Connecticut.



Flood Safety Tips

Your home has been flooded. Although floodwaters may be down in some areas, many dangers still exist. Here are things to remember in the days ahead:

- Roads may be closed, because they have been damaged or are covered by water. Barricades may have been placed for your protection. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, do not attempt to cross and find another way.
- Keep listening to the radio for news about what to do, where to go, or places to avoid.
- Emergency workers will be assisting people in flooded areas. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- Play it safe. Additional flooding or flash floods can occur several hours after a tropical system has passed. Listen for local warnings and information.

If you must walk or drive in areas that have been flooded -

- Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet.
- Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Flooding may have caused familiar places to be changed by eroding roads and walkways.
- If your car stalls in rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground.

Cleaning up and repairing your home

- Upon returning home, turn off the electricity at the main breaker or fuse box, even if the power is off in your community. That way you can decide when your home is dry enough to turn it back on.
- Do not drink tap water and be sure to have your well pumped out and cleaned

STATE ENCON POLICE VESSEL ACQUISITIONS

The Connecticut State Environmental Conservation Police have recently received two new patrol vessels that will enhance our patrol capabilities for Boating Safety, Marine Fisheries Enforcement and Homeland Security. One is a 2005 27' all-weather *SafeBoat* that is powered by twin 225 HP Mercury Optimax outboards. The other is a 2005 42' *Wesmac* commercial fisheries vessel that is powered by a 700 HP diesel engine. Both vessels will be equipped with state of the art electronic navigational equipment, a 360-degree infrared thermal imaging camera, emergency lighting, electronic audible warning device, VHF, DEP and CSP radios. Both vessels will also be equipped with a radiation dosimeter that was designed by Dr. Edward Wilds, DEP Director of Radiation. This product design is the first one in the United States for use in the marine environment. The *SafeBoat* was purchased with funding from the Nuclear Safety Assessment Funds, State Boating Funds and monies from the National Marine Fisheries Service. The *Wesmac* was purchased totally with funds from the National Marine Fisheries Service. Both of these vessels will be moored at the proposed EnCon Police docking facility at the Millstone Nuclear Power Plant in Waterford.



27' SAFEBOAT



42' WESMAC

In addition to the aforementioned vessels, DEMHS has approved the EnCon Police Division's request to utilize their funding from the 2004 & 2005 LETPP funds to start the bidding process for two 20' center console patrol boats, powered by 150 HP four-stroke outboards. One vessel will be utilized for patrol on the Connecticut River and the other for patrol in southwestern Connecticut.

Town Notes:

GOSHEN, CT



Robert Valentine, Goshen 1st Selectman, has made public safety a top priority in the town of Goshen. Town officials determined that Town Hall needed a generator in the event of a power outage. Being able to power Town Hall during an outage will allow town officials to continue to run the town, open their emergency operations center (EOC) and offer shelter for residents.

Over the years the town has lost power during severe weather. The Ice Storm in November 2002 left the town without power for five days. "Being prepared for all types of disasters is important to the people of Goshen, said Valentine. A generator will help us in our preparedness efforts." Valentine said town officials were in the market to purchase a generator when Dan Lucas, Goshen resident and AT&T Connecticut (formerly SBC) employee, learned that his company was taking a generator out of service to upgrade to a larger unit. "Dan was in the right place at the right time. He knew we were looking for a generator and asked SBC if they would be willing to donate it to us," said Valentine.

"We know first-hand the importance of advance planning for backup power needs and are pleased to have been able to help the town of Goshen with its plan to enhance the safety and security of its infrastructure and, by extension, the town's population," said Seth Bloom, Spokesperson for AT&T Connecticut

While the Town did have to pay for the electrical hook-up and building materials town folks donated time and talent to build the generator shed outside of Town Hall. The Lions Club also donated \$4000.00 to the generator fund.



Bricks will be used to face the building to match the Town Hall.

"We used good old fashion yankee ingenuity to get the job done. Thanks to the generosity of AT&T Connecticut, the Lions Club and the hard work of many of our residents the town of Goshen will be more prepared for all types of emergencies," said Valentine.



Robert Valentine, Goshen 1st Selectman



The Police Officer Standards and Training Council's Field Services Training Division, and The Domestic Terrorism Unit of the Connecticut State Police, in conjunction with the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, is offering a one (1) day seminar titled "Operation Safeguard." The seminar will be held on **Wednesday, April 5, 2006** at the [Rentschler Field & Conference Center](#) in East Hartford, CT from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration will begin at 0800. The lead instructor for this seminar will be Detective Patrick J. W. Chagnon, Connecticut State Police.

"Operation Safeguard" is a public outreach program designed to generate public awareness within private industry and sectors by providing descriptions of potential terrorist indicators and suspicious activities. This presentation is offered as a "Train-the-Trainer" and upon completion, participants will be expected to train the private sector community in terrorism awareness.

The one day presentation will include:

- Terrorism: Background and History
- Intelligence Based Policing
- Homeland Security and the public
- Risk Management Concept for the Public
- Police and the Public

Each participant will receive instructional material to facilitate this training in your jurisdiction. This is the first phase of this training initiative; it is open to 150 officers with community policing, crime prevention or school recourse officer duties.

Questions about this seminar or registration may be addressed to Mr. Miller by telephone at (203) 427-2626 or by email at gi.miller@po.state.ct.us.

Upcoming Training & Exercise

March 21—Veteran’s Home CERT—every Tuesday for 10 weeks.

March 23—CEO NIMS Compliance Seminar, NW Chamber of Commerce, Torrington

March 24—CEO NIMS Compliance Seminar—NECCOG Office, Dayville

March 28 or 30—TBD, SEOC Flood Exercise

April 2—DPH MASH setup

April 7—CERT Instructor Workshop, Sheraton East Hartford

April 10—SNS FSE Controller Training

For training and exercise questions please contact Paul Benyeda, Bob Christ, Bob Scata, or Sharon Mazzochi at 860-727-9319. *Please note—this is a new number. Training office has been moved to Brainard Field, 269 Maxim Road, Hartford, CT.

Training is critical for first responders and is readily available through the State Fire Academy, Regional Fire Schools, and the Police Officers Training Academy. First responders include Police, Fire, Public Works, Education and 911 dispatchers to name but a few.

All of the following organizations have the ability to deliver **NIMS training** to your police officers, firefighters, public works employees, 911 dispatchers, health workers, education staff and emergency management personnel. Training can be delivered weekdays, weekends or evenings to meet your needs. The NIMS program can be delivered in four, eight or twelve hour modules depending on the duties assigned to personnel.

You should also know that these programs are available on line at FEMA’s web site:
http://www.fema.gov/tab_education.shtm

Training Facility Contact Information: call to schedule training.

Police Officers Training Council	203-238-6505
Connecticut Fire Academy	860-627-6363
Eastern CT Fireman’s Training School	860-487-1105
New Haven Regional Fire Academy	203-946-6215
Wolcott Fire School	203-879-1559
Hartford County Fire School	860-828-3242
Burrville Fire Training School	860-482-7496
Valley Fire Training School	203-736-6222
Middlesex County Fire School	860-663-1308
Fairfield Fireman’s Training School	203-254-4709
Stamford Regional Training Fire School	203-977-4673

All State Agencies should contact Paul Benyeda at DEMHS, 860-727-9319 to arrange training for your employees.